

H.R. 869

MERCED IRRIGATION DISTRICT

SPILLWAY MODIFICATION PROJECT

Project Details:

- 70,000 additional acre-feet in a single wet year.
- Increase average critical year water supply by 15,000 acre-feet.
- Provide incidental flood control benefits
- Generate an additional 10,000 mega-watt hours per year of clean, renewable energy (enough to serve 1,700 homes).
- Expanded recreational opportunities on Lake McClure.

Costs:

- NO State or Federal tax dollars.
- Approximately \$40 million in capital costs.
- Minimal operations and maintenance costs.
- Less expensive (in total cost and cost per acre-foot of new storage) than any on-going CALFED Surface Storage Investigation.

Beneficiaries:

- Jobs – stimulating depressed Merced County economy
- Energy
- Agriculture
- Flood Control
- Resource Management



U.S. Representative Jeff Denham
California's 19th District

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Supporters of the Legislation:

- Merced Irrigation District
- Merced County
- City of Merced
- City of Livingston
- City of Atwater
- Paramount Farming
- Merced County Farm Bureau
- Westlands Water District
- San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors
- Coachella Valley Water District
- Association of California Water Agencies
- Horizon Holdings (Malibu Boats)
- International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)
- Merced Boosters Club

*"We applaud
Congressmen Cardoza,
Costa, Denham,
McCarthy, and Nunes
for their working in a
bipartisanship manner
on an issue that is so
critical to California's
farmers and ranchers:
water reliability."
– California Farm
Bureau Federation*



Brief Timeline:

1926 – Exchequer Dam was completed.

1964 – Federal Power Commission licenses the Merced Hydroelectric Project through the year 2014.

1967 – New Exchequer Dam was completed.

1992 – George H.W. Bush signs into law a bill that would allow FERC to consider the relicensing of Merced Irrigation District’s Exchequer Dam at its present height.



Overview of H.R. 869:

The water crisis in California has been a constant problem for decades.

This bill provides the authorization for the Merced Irrigation District to submit their plan to modify their “New Exchequer” Dam and provide for more water storage during a certain 60-day time period (Summer months between May 1st and July 31st) in “wet” years to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) for review.

- The modification of the New Exchequer Dam Spillway is simply an additional 10 feet in height.
- Increases water supply up to 70,000 acre-feet in a single wet weather year.
- Provides flood control benefits.
- Generates an additional 10,000 mega-watt hours per year of clean, renewable energy, enough to serve 1,700 homes.
- Expands recreational opportunities in Lake McClure.

Quotes regarding H.R. 869:

“The Merced Irrigation District is pursuing a plan that will increase storage at Lake McClure by 70,000 acre-feet a year in years like this. As part of its Federal Energy Regulatory Commission relicensing, the MID is asking for permission to increase the height of spillway gates and raise the elevation of the ungated spillway by 10 feet.

“The \$40 million cost will be paid by the MID, not the state or federal government. The proposal has the endorsement of both California senators and all five of the Valley’s congressmen.” – *Merced Sun-Star*

“The legislation would allow temporary (2-8 weeks) storage of water in wet years instead of releasing the excess water immediately when it is not needed downstream.” – *Central Valley Business Times*

“The Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) is pleased to support H.R. 869, to clarify the definition of flood control operations for the purposes of the operation and maintenance... A direct benefit of the increase will be to maintain flood control protections and create jobs.” – *Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA)*



Co-Sponsors of H.R. 869:

Rep. Cardoza (CA – 18)
Rep. Costa (CA – 20)
Rep. McCarthy (CA – 22)
Rep. Nunes (CA – 21)

Merced Irrigation District:

The Project is located on Merced River in Mariposa County, California, and consists of 2 reservoirs (Lake McClure and McSwain Reservoir), 2 powerhouses (New Exchequer and McSwain powerhouses) and various recreation facilities on Lake McClure and McSwain Reservoir. The installed capacity of the Project is 103.5 megawatts.

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REP. JEFF DENHAM